

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 3, and 9 to 12 were rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Baker, U.S. Patent No. 4,936,811, in view of Devers, U.S. Patent No. 6,672,596. Claims 13 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '464. Claims 16 to 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '464 as applied to claim 13, and further in view of Devers.

Claim 6 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1 to 3, and 9 to 12

Claims 1 to 3, and 9 to 12 were rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Baker, U.S. Patent No. 4,936,811, in view of Devers, U.S. Patent No. 6,672,596.

The previous arguments from the last response are incorporated herein. In addition to these arguments, neither Baker nor Devers teaches "wherein at least one of the ring sections is elastically deformable sufficient to enable the single piece component to expand to a circumference larger than the outer circumference of the connecting collar." Devers seeks to have the annular body 41 fit within boot seal 38 as shown in Fig. 4. There also is no teaching in Devers to make the segmented bands 22 of Baker "elastically deformable sufficient to enable the single piece component to expand to a circumference larger than the outer circumference of the connecting collar" as claimed in claim 1.

Withdrawal of the rejections to claim 1 and its dependent claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claims 13 and 15

Claims 13 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '464.

The previous arguments from the last response are incorporated herein.

Withdrawal of the rejections to claim 13 and its dependent claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claims 16 to 19

Claims 16 to 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '464 further in view of Devers.

The previous arguments from the last response are incorporated herein.

Withdrawal of the rejections to claims 16 to 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

The present application is respectfully submitted as being in condition for allowance and applicants respectfully request such action.

Respectfully submitted,

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